AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A network distributed tracking wire transfer protocol comprising:

a request message formatted to transport a variable length identification string, the identification string for specifying the identity of an entity in a distributed data collection; and

a response message formatted to transport a variable length location string, the location string for specifying the ~~network~~ location of data associated with an entity in a distributed data collection; and

a redirect message formatted to transport redirection information, the redirection information comprising information for determining a location of location information associated with the entity specified in the identification string;

wherein the protocol supports a machine-independent relationship between the identification string and the location string ~~can be spontaneously and dynamically created and modified~~.

2. (Original) The network distributed tracking wire transfer protocol defined in claim 1, wherein the protocol is application independent.

3. (Original) The network distributed tracking wire transfer protocol defined in claim 1, wherein the protocol is organizationally independent.

4. (Original) The network distributed tracking wire transfer protocol defined in claim 1, wherein the protocol is geographically independent.

5. (Currently Amended) A system having a network distributed tracking wire transfer protocol for storing and identifying data with a distributed data collection, comprising:

a data repository, the data repository for storing data in a distributed data collection;

a client entity, the client entity for manipulating data in the distributed data collection; and

a first server entity, the first server entity operative to locate data in the distributed data collection;

wherein the first server entity is responsive to a client request from the first client entity to provide a redirection message to the first client entity if the first server entity cannot provide at least one location string to the client entity corresponding to an identifier string in the client request ~~the client entity transmits an identifier string to the first server entity along with a client request and the first server entity provides at least one location string to the client entity in response thereto~~.

6. (Currently Amended) The system defined in claim 5, wherein the client entity comprises a first data server of a plurality of data servers and the ~~further comprising a second server entity coupled to the~~ first server entity comprises a second data server of the plurality of data servers in communication with the first data server.

7. (Currently Amended) The system defined in claim 5, wherein each of the client entity and the first server entity comprises a shared function and wherein the client entity is configured to apply the shared function to the redirect message to determine a location of a location string corresponding to the identifier string ~~maps the identifier string received from the client entity to the at least one location string~~.

8. (Currently Amended) The system defined in claim 7, wherein the shared function comprises a hash function and the redirect message comprises a data table configured for operation with the hash function ~~mapping is performed using a hash operation~~.

9. (Currently Amended) The system defined in claim 6, wherein the first data server is configured to transmit the client request to another data server, the another data server determined from the redirection message upon receipt of the redirection

message. ~~entity transmits the client request to the second server entity if the first server entity cannot provide the at least one location string to the client entity.~~

10. -11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A method for storing and retrieving tracking information over a network using a wire transfer protocol, comprising the steps of:

providing a location string and an identification string, the location string for specifying the location of data associated with an entity in a distributed data collection and the identification string for specifying the identification of an entity in the distributed data collection;

storing information at a data repository entity by associating an identification string associated with an entity with each particular stored unit of information associated with the entity and by mapping the identification string to at least one location string associated with the data repository entity, the identification string and the at least one location string ~~for a particular unit of information~~ being stored at a first server entity coupled to the data repository entity;

transmitting a request from a client entity to the first server entity to retrieve at least one location string associated with the entity ~~a particular stored unit of information~~, the request including the identification string associated with the entity ~~stored unit of information~~; and

receiving the request at the first server entity; and

~~responding to the client entity by providing at least one location string associated with the particular stored unit of information to the client entity~~ responding to the client entity with a redirect message containing information for determining the location of at least one location string if the at least one location string is not at the first server entity.

13. (Currently Amended) The method for storing and retrieving tracking information defined in claim 12, further comprising the step of transmitting the request to a second server entity ~~prior to responding to the client entity~~, the second server entity coupled to the first server entity and having stored therewith a [[the]] mapping of the

identification string and the at least one location string for the entity ~~particular unit of information~~.

14. (Currently Amended) The method for storing and retrieving tracking information defined in claim 13, wherein the second server entity responds to the client entity by providing the location string associated with the entity ~~particular stored unit of information~~ to the ~~second~~ client entity.

15. (Original) The method for storing and retrieving tracking information defined in claim 12, wherein the lengths of the identification string and the at least one location string are variable.

16. (Original) The method for storing and retrieving tracking information defined in claim 12, further comprising the step of spontaneously and dynamically manipulating the mapping of an identification string to a location string.

17. (New) The protocol of claim 1, wherein the information relating to the location of location information comprises data configured in a table for use in calculating the location of location information with a shared function, whereby a client entity configured with the protocol and receiving the table, and a server entity configured with the protocol and sending the table to the client entity, each comprise the shared function.

18. (New) The protocol of claim 1, wherein the information relating to the location of location information comprises a function.

19. (New) The system of claim 5, wherein the redirection message comprises information on a location of location data pertaining to data associated with the identifier string in the client request.

20. (New) The system of claim 19, wherein the redirection message comprises a function description adapted for use by the client entity to obtain the location of location information by applying the function description to the identifier string in the client request.

21. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein responding to the client entity with a redirect message comprises sending the client entity data configured in a table and the client entity determining the location of at least one location string by applying a shared function to the table.

22. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein responding to the client entity with a redirect message comprises the first server entity sending a function description to the client entity adapted for use by the client entity to obtain the location of the at least one location string.

23. (New) The method of claim 22, wherein the client entity applies the function from the redirect message to the identification string to obtain the location of the at least one location string.